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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-seventh year

Identical letters dated 21 August 2012 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I am compelled to draw your attention and, through you, the attention of the international community, to the ongoing and intensifying acts of violence, terrorism and racist hate crimes being perpetrated by illegal Israeli settlers as well as Israeli citizens against Palestinian civilians and their properties in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

The latest vicious incident of settler terror took place on Thursday, 16 August 2012, when illegal Israeli settlers from the settlement of "Bat Ayin" near Bethlehem in the Occupied West Bank hurled a firebomb at a car, painted bright yellow, clearly marking it as a Palestinian taxi. The taxi was carrying six Palestinians, all from the same family, including two 4-year-old children, who were headed to a nearby supermarket. The terror attack caused the car to flip over into a ditch and caused injury to all six passengers, including second- and third-degree burns to the face and body of the passengers. One passenger, the father of the family, Ayman Ghayaza, sitting next to the driver, remains in serious condition. Furthermore, a short while after the settler terror attack was reported, six additional firebombs were hurled at cars with Palestinian licence plates on a central road in the Occupied West Bank.

Despicable and destructive acts against Palestinian civilians and their properties, such as this latest act of settler terror, have continued unabated and over the past year have increased. This can easily be attributed to the fact that Israel's illegal settlement colonization campaign and the settlers residing within the settlements are funded, protected and armed by the Israeli government, which has transferred and enabled them to live in these illegal settlements in grave breach of international law, including, in particular, the Fourth Geneva Convention, and which allows them to commit such crimes against defenceless Palestinians throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory with absolute impunity. The lawlessness of the settlers, including deadly violence, terror, harassment and intimidation against Palestinian civilians and their properties, is facilitated, aided and abetted by the

occupying Power which bears full responsibility for the illegal presence and all the illegal actions of the settlers. The international community, including the Security Council, must compel the occupying Power to act forthwith to bring an end to the terror campaign being perpetrated by the Israeli settlers against the Palestinian civilian population under its 45-year-old ruthless occupation.

I would now like to turn your attention to another cruel and barbaric incident which involved an attack against three Palestinian youths by a mob of 50 Israelis in Jerusalem's city centre, also on Thursday, 16 August 2012, the same day as the vicious settler firebomb attack on the taxi transporting the family of six mentioned above.

The hate crime — described by several witnesses as an attempted lynching — occurred as Jamal Julani, 17 years old, a resident of the Occupied East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Ras Al-Amud, and his four friends were walking in West Jerusalem's Zion Square, when they suddenly found themselves being chased by a group of youths shouting "Arabs, death to Arabs". Ten of the 50 Israelis chasing Julani and his friends finally caught Julani and began beating him, kicking him even after he fell to the ground, unconscious.

All of this took place as hundreds of bystanders stood by watching. When paramedics arrived on the scene, Julani no longer had a pulse and they had to use cardiopulmonary resuscitation and defibrillators for more than 10 minutes before his pulse returned. To add to the repulsiveness of this latest hate crime was the statements made in an interview to reporters by one of the Israeli suspects, who said that "if it was up to me, I'd have murdered him" and that "he could die for all I care — he's an Arab". Julani remains in the hospital in serious condition.

This brutal hate crime highlights the growing racist sentiment of Israelis towards Palestinians, a sentiment that is promoted by some of Israel's political and spiritual leaders who help to foster a toxic atmosphere by condoning and even encouraging violence against Palestinians. Moreover, it is also fostered by the mere reality of the fact that Israeli governmental officials continue to be lax in bringing the perpetrators of violence and hate crimes against Palestinians to justice, as there are only a few indictments or convictions in dozens of cases of assaults on Palestinians and their property every year. We call on the international community to strongly condemn this latest hate crime and compel Israel to take swift action against the perpetrators and bring them to justice. We also call on the international community to call on the occupying Power to end the incitement to violence by Israeli political and spiritual leaders against Palestinians as well.

Relevant to the issues of impunity discussed in the present letter, we would also like to bring to your attention that, on 12 August 2012, an Israeli court convicted an Israeli soldier — who had deliberately killed in cold blood Raya Abu Hajjaj and her daughter Majda, who were clearly holding up white flags, during Israel's war against the Gaza Strip in late December 2008 and in the beginning of January 2009 — to just 45 days of imprisonment. This latest decision by an Israeli court clearly provides further proof of the flagrant disregard for the lives of Palestinian civilians by the occupying Power and confirms the absence of individual criminal responsibility against those who commit heinous crimes against innocent Palestinian civilians.

Continuation of the current unjust, violent, racist and hate-filled situation will only further exacerbate the tense situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and between Palestinians and Israelis, further stoking anger and rage, deepening mistrust and further endangering the dwindling prospects for a peaceful settlement of this conflict. This explosive situation thus requires urgent attention and serious action by the international community, including by the Security Council, in accordance with its responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 432 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 26 June 2012 (A/ES-10/560-S/2012/492), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations